Amid deep divisions over ceasefire agreement, Israel launches massive attack on Lebanon

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Within just one day, the two-week "ceasefire" with Iran announced by Trump Tuesday night is already falling apart, amid ongoing bombardments across the Middle East and an intensifying internal crisis within the United States itself. Sharp divisions have opened up within the ruling class and state apparatus over how to proceed after a war that has not achieved its aims.

The entire situation raises the urgent imperative for workers not to rely on hopes for some sort of peaceful resolution of the imperialist war against Iran, but to develop an independent mass antiwar movement.

Even what was agreed to as the basis of the ceasefire is itself entirely unclear and disputed. Just hours after the deal was announced, Israel carried out a massive bombardment of Lebanon on Wednesday. It was the single deadliest day of Israeli attacks on the country since 2006. At least 254 people were killed and more than 1,100 wounded, including 35 children. Israeli jets struck apartment buildings, residential streets and crowded commercial areas across central Beirut and the southern suburbs.

The ceasefire between the US and Iran was first announced by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who brokered the agreement. In his announcement Tuesday evening, Sharif declared that the United States and Iran "along with their allies have agreed to an immediate ceasefire everywhere, including Lebanon and elsewhere."

On Wednesday, the speaker of Iran's parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, accused the United States of violating the ceasefire by continuing to attack Lebanon through its Israeli ally, writing "in such a situation, a bilateral ceasefire or negotiations is unreasonable." Israel asserts that Lebanon was not covered by the agreement, a claim that both Trump and White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt backed on Wednesday, with Trump referring to it as a "separate skirmish."

There are indications that Israel carried out the attack on Lebanon to sabotage the US-Iran ceasefire agreement. The *Wall Street Journal* published an article Wednesday, under the headline "Israel Was Informed Late About Cease-Fire Deal and Wasn't Happy," reporting that Israel "wasn't formally part of the Iran negotiations."

Israel, however, would not have launched an attack on this scale without the support of significant factions within the US political establishment.

Within the United States, criticism from the political establishment, both Democratic and Republican, has centered on condemnations of Trump's ceasefire announcement as a debacle for American imperialism and a dangerous and unacceptable concession to the Iranians.

David Sanger, the senior national security correspondent for the *New York Times,* wrote Wednesday that the ceasefire "resolved none of the fundamental issues that led to the war." Sanger quoted Richard Fontaine of the Center for a New American Security, who declared that "Iran remains in control of the Strait" and that it is "hard to believe that the United States and the world could accept a situation in which Iran remains in control of a key energy checkpoint indefinitely. That would be a materially worse outcome than existed before the war."

The *Wall Street Journal* editorial board published a statement Wednesday titled, "Trump Declares Premature Victory in Iran," arguing that the "Iranian regime remains a threat in the Strait of Hormuz and the job is far from finished." The *Journal* criticized Trump's "inconsistent rhetoric on the war" and concluded: "The next test for Mr. Trump will be

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whether he takes his two-week cease-fire deadline seriously. If he does, and Iran plays its usual games, then he really will have to 'finish the job.'"

Washington Post columnist Max Boot wrote Wednesday that Iran "remains able to control, at least for now, which ships transit the Strait of Hormuz—which it was not doing when this war began."

The Democrats—who just days ago warned of "World War III," accused Trump of "war crimes" and warned that soldiers who carry out his orders will be prosecuted under the laws of war—are shifting the tone of their criticisms: not that Trump went too far, but that he sold out the crown jewels, and that he is treating US imperialist policy as a New York real estate deal.

Democratic Senator Chris Murphy told CNN Wednesday: "But if Iran has the Strait permanently now, then what, what an error, what a miscalculation this entire endeavor was."

From the standpoint of the Trump administration, a "ceasefire" means nothing. Every "ceasefire" proclaimed by Trump in the Middle East has functioned as the prelude to further bloody military action. The June 2025 ceasefire that followed Operation Midnight Hammer—the B-2 bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities—was followed within eight months by the full-scale war that began on February 28.

Late Wedneday, Trump posted on Truth Social, "All U.S. Ships, Aircraft, and Military Personnel, with additional Ammunition, Weaponry, and anything else that is appropriate and necessary for the lethal prosecution and destruction of an already substantially degraded Enemy, will remain in place in, and around, Iran, until such time as the REAL AGREEMENT reached is fully complied with." Trump thratened to attack Iran "bigger, and better, and stronger than anyone has ever seen before," adding, "our great Military is Loading Up and Resting, looking forward, actually, to its next Conquest."

The strategic objectives of the United States have not changed. Washington launched this war to impose direct control over the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz and reverse the consequences of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. War against Iran is itself part of an escalating global war—one that extends from the Middle East to the confrontation with Russia and China—and the pressure for renewed military escalation will intensify.

The entire experience of the past two weeks must be understood as an enormous warning to the working class in the United States and internationally. Just 24 hours ago, Trump was pledging to "end" Iranian civilization—threatening to transfer the methods of the Gaza genocide to a country of 90 million people. Trump's genocidal language cannot be unsaid, and genocide has been officially adopted as a method of conducting war by an American president.

By resorting to Hitlerian rhetoric and threats of civilizational destruction, Trump has shattered the last remnants of the propaganda that US imperialist interventions are carried out in the name of "human rights" or "democracy." The world has been shown that the United States is led by a criminal oligarchy that treats entire societies as expendable obstacles to be smashed into submission.

The only way to stop this war is through the independent mobilization of the working class as a class force. Neither the Democratic Party nor any faction of the political establishment will oppose imperialist war in principle. Whatever their tactical disputes with Trump, the Democrats defend the same strategic aims—US domination of the Middle East—and function above all to suppress the emergence of a movement from below that threatens the entire structure of capitalist rule.

The fight against imperialist barbarism requires the development of an independent working class movement—in workplaces, across industries and across borders—against the war, against the assault on social programs and against the capitalist system that is the root cause of war, dictatorship and social inequality.

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